gone

By: rumiberri

"This is not where I belong." [One-Shot]

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She sees traces of her in the waning sunlight—orange, purple, *pink*.

Where are you Madoka?

Where have you gone?

Once sure footsteps are hesitant now. Tentative. Wavering.

Lost.

Is this what happens when the world moves on without you?

When time continues its frustrating moments of the click, click, click, with each swing of the endless pendulum?

\\

The empty desk is her first clue.

Like clockwork, she is supposed to be there.

The nurse's assistant.

A different girl.

Tall, friendly.

Not Madoka.

/

She follows Miki Sayaka.

Her usual path diverges. A left at the hospital and footsteps heavy as she heads down a seemingly random street.

But she knows where this leads and the air threatens to consume her with each second passing by.

The gate creaks, swinging open as Sayaka pushes past the entrance and she can only watch as she disappears inside.

Mitakihara Cemetery.

Words like a twisting snake against her heart, drowning out the noiseless sound.

No. No. *No*.

Her legs deny and take her away from the truth.

No.

\\

Days pass.

She needs to know.

The cursor blinks, waiting, but she already knows this timeline is meaningless.

Trembling fingers.

Ka. Na. Me. Ma. Do. Ka.

Eyes shut, squeezed tightly as the mouse clicks, filling the screen with repeating words.

A calming breath.

Eyes open.

Car Accident.

Young girl caught in traffic accident.

Young Teen survived by family.

Negligent driver causing death of—

Her laptop is thrown, shattering against the wall. Sparks flicker as circuits fizzle out, fading away.

She sobs openly, heart wrenching because her lifeline is already no longer here.

Madoka is already *gone*.

/

There's a strong impulse to disappear. To hide. To leave.

She instead becomes a specter within the city.

School is forgotten—useless.

She avoids them all. Witches. Kyuubey. Tomoe Mami. Miki Sayaka.

The ongoing threat of Walpurgisnacht.

They mean nothing to her.

Madoka is not here.

Here is not her happy ending.

\\

She wanders aimlessly.

Waiting for the timer to fill. For the sand to count down her reset. Her restart.

Back to Madoka.

Their meeting is by chance.

Purely coincidental.

Painfully so.

A familiar laugh. A sound that cuts deep. She looks up as she sees a family walking by.

Familiar kind eyes.

She bows her head.

Click.

/

Tomoe Mami finds her.

A kind smile, offered friendship.

Veiled insanity hidden in both their eyes.

"Walpurgisnacht is coming soon. Will you help me?"

Click.

\

Tomoe Mami is dead.

She remains hidden in the shadows.

Even Kyuubey can't find her.

She knows, instinctively, when Miki Sayaka contracts.

Her wish... her heart twists but she knows it's not for Madoka.

Knows it, yet she still...

/

"So you're the irregular that Kyuubey keeps talking about."

Sakura Kyouko.

"So what, you want this city too? I'm not going to let some—"

Click.

\\

The highrise buildings offer her comfort somehow.

Rain falls across her cheeks like unshed tears.

"Madoka."

The sky weeps with her.

"I'm sorry, Madoka."

/

Miki Sayaka is dead.

Sakura Kyouko is looking.

Searching for her.

But she's good at hiding.

Her soul gem remains bright as she waits.

And as the wind picks up, she knows it'll soon be over.

"*Madoka*."

\

She lands lightly, boots splashing in the water.

"Damn," Kyouko groans at her. "Guess this was your plan all along."
Her voice is pained. Softer than usual.

She's dying.

She kneels besides her, head bowed.

A prayer offered to her forsaken soul. To all of theirs.

Eyes open. She's watching, face suddenly tired.

Kind.

"I leave this city to you," Kyouko whispers.

No regrets.

But, she's already lost in memories.

Another, selfless girl lying in water.

She closes her eyes, reaching for her shield.

"I'm sorry. This is not where I belong."

Click.

She's gone.

/

"Akemi Homura. Nice to meet you." She bows low, eyes flickering to the back.

A familiar girl with pink, bubblegum hair sits and something finally unclenches from her heart.

Madoka.

This time she'll win.

This tim**e.**